



Standard Update

Better Data Through Standards



Vol. 2, No. 3, Winter 2000

The Standard Update, EPA's newsletter about data standards, contains information you can read and reuse whatever your interest in information management may be. For more information on any newsletter topic, see the Environmental Data Registry (EDR) Website at <http://www.epa.gov/edr/>. The EDR Website is your source for Standard Update back issues and a vehicle for reader comments.

This issue of the Standard Update describes the cooperative effort between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) to set data standards. Also featured in this issue is an update on Agency data standards and news on the latest release of the Environmental Data Registry (EDR) and its associated applications.

State/EPA Partnership Forges Ahead with Four New Areas for Standardization

Four new areas for standardization are being pursued by the Environmental Data Standards Council (EDSC). The Council operates under the auspices of ECOS, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of state environmental commissioners. Through delegated federal programs and state-developed programs, states and tribes issue most of the permits, initiate most of the enforcement and compliance actions, and develop many of the innovative ideas for dealing with environmental issues.

The four new areas for standardization are Enforcement/Compliance, Permitting, Tribal Identifiers, and Geolocational. Action Teams, made up of representatives from EPA, states,

and tribes for each of these data standard areas, are meeting and making progress in scoping, defining, and developing data elements, or adopting existing sources of naming conventions as standards, for each data standard area. The Council has selected the Website for Ideas and Solutions on Environmental Information and Regulatory Innovations (WISER) as the discussion forum on candidate data standards and for soliciting comments from other environmental partners. Additional information on EDSC activities can be found at [http://oaspub.epa.gov/edr/EDSC\\$.startup/](http://oaspub.epa.gov/edr/EDSC$.startup/)

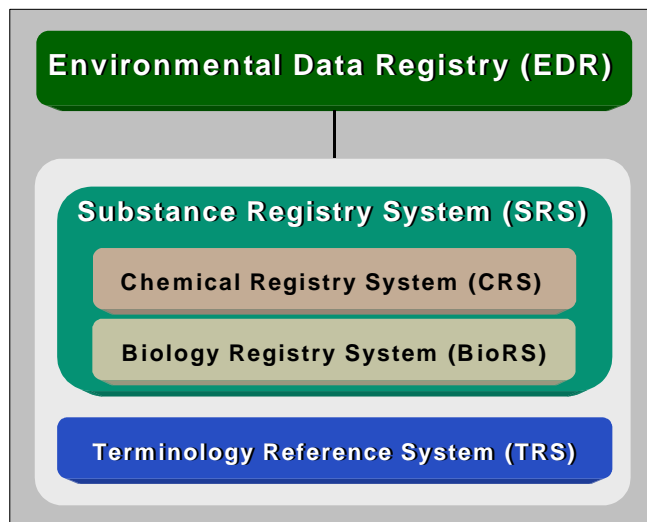
EPA Adopts Chemical and Biology Standards

The EPA Quality and Information Council (QIC) approved and adopted as final the chemical identification and biological taxonomy data standards. The QIC also agreed on the business rules supporting these two data standards. Business rules describe the procedures, timelines, and implementation guidelines for the standard. The finalization of these standards represents a significant partnering accomplishment by state and EPA work group participants. For more information on these standards, visit [http://oaspub.epa.gov/edr/EPASTD\\$.STARTUP/](http://oaspub.epa.gov/edr/EPASTD$.STARTUP/)

New Release of the Environmental Data Registry

If you haven't visited the EDR recently, you'll notice some changes. In the most recent release, the EDR (version 5.1) was redesigned to be part of a single integrated metadata registry, a reference to EPA information resources. The new system design integrates several collections of EPA metadata including data elements; chemical identification information; biological taxonomy information; and defined terms.

These revisions support the Agency's information integration activities, including the Blueprint for a



National Environmental Information Exchange Network. The blueprint, developed by an integrated team of participants from EPA and ECOS, defines a network that enables environmental agencies to establish and adopt a common format or template for data exchange. Once established, the template will improve the traditional way that states feed information to EPA's national data systems.

Standardization is an integral part of improving the quality and consistency of information exchanged between trading partners. As such, data standardization is one component of the network. The network will promote and

encourage the use of data standards. Each partner will determine if, when, and how they might use standards endorsed by the EDSC.

EDR Subsystems

The following applications comprise the integrated EDR suite of tools.

The EDR (<http://www.epa.gov/edr/>) is a single comprehensive source of information about the definition, origin, source, and location of environmental data, which supports partnerships between the states and EPA through a framework for establishing data standards, electronic reporting, and access to consistent data definitions. The EDR also contains information about data (metadata) from many Agency information systems.

The Substance Registry System (SRS) (<http://www.epa.gov/srs/>), just released, provides information on substances and how they are represented in EPA regulations and information systems. The SRS serves as the central portal to both chemical and biological identification information. In the future, it will also contain physical parameters such as turbidity, pH, and color.

The Chemical Registry System (CRS) (<http://www.epa.gov/crs/>) supports the Chemical Identification Data Standard by providing a common, consistent, and convenient way to identify chemical information across EPA databases.

The Biology Registry System (BioRS) (<http://www.epa.gov/biors/>) is a new EDR application that provides information on biological organisms and how they are represented in EPA regulations and information systems. Developed in response to recommendations of the Biological Taxonomy Data Standard Working Group, the BioRS supports and conforms to EPA's Biological Taxonomy Data Standard, which provides a uniform reference to biological organisms and a basis for sharing biological information across

EPA data systems. The initial load contains a small amount of data for demonstration purposes, but several large data loads are planned after BioRS's release.

The Terminology Reference System (TRS) (<http://www.epa.gov/trs/>) is a single source of terminology and definitions from many environmental statutes and programs.

EPA National Developers Conference to Feature EDR and Data Standards Process Workshops

A demonstration of the EDR and a presentation of the Agency's data standard setting process and implementation plans will be featured at the EPA's Second Annual National Developers Conference at Research Triangle Park, NC on April 3-5, 2001.

For additional information on Agency data standards activities, contact Lyn Burger, Chief, Data Standards Branch, Collection Strategies Division, Office of Information Collection, 202-260-5409 or Burger.Lyn@epa.gov.
